Project I.D. No. 177

NAME: 今井 Imai, Kiyo DATE OF BIRTH: 1891 PLACE OF BIRTH: Ibaragi
Age: 86 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Theological seminary

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 1920 Age: 29 M.S. S Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Missionary 2. Pastor (husband) 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Los Angeles 2. San Francisco 3 Walnut Grove
Religious affiliation: Christian church 4. Dinuba
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: _____
Name of relocation center: Poston, Arizona
Dispensation of property: Left with Americans. Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: Dinuba

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: 1945
Address/es: 1. Dinuba 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Husband died

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 10/6/77 Place: Dinuba
Translator: Mabel Hall

Q: Is your name Kiyo Imai?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Ibaragi Prefecture, but as my father was a pastor I went everywhere. I was born in Ibaragi Prefecture, but stayed there till I was 4 years old. As my father received assignment to different places we went to Yamanashi where we stayed the longest, then to Shizuoka and Nagano and finally to Chiba, where he retired.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in 1891.

Q: How old are you now?

A: I am 86 years old now.

Q: What kind of a man was your father?

A: He was not too strict nor too loose. He was an old Methodist, so he was a righteous man. When we were in Yamanashi there was another church about 25 miles away, and he had to go there once a week. It was very cold in Yamanashi in winter. After the service he used to walk home in the snow and came home around 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. As I saw my father's devotion when I was young, I wanted to become an evangelist, and I attended a theological seminary.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: My mother was born in Ibaragi Prefecture, also, and was a friend of my father since grammar school days, so they were married. Mother came from a rich family but she did not have much education. She only had 8 years of schooling, but she brought us up in the poverty helping our father.

Q: Was your father a pastor when he got married?

A: No, he was not a pastor yet. He wanted to become a physician but did not have enough money, so he worked as a newspaperman in Tokyo. In the meantime a Canadian missionary, Dr. McDonald came to Tokyo and my father was introduced to Christianity and became a Christian. Later he decided to become a pastor, and went to a theological seminary in Tokyo. When I was 2 or 3 years old I was baptized by Dr. McDonald.

Q: What do you remember about your family when you were a child?

A: He was a strict Methodist, so we had worship service before each meal. My father read the Bible, then he prayed, mother prayed and sometimes children prayed before we had meals.

Q: Have you ever been scolded by your father?

A: He was strict, so he scolded us. I remember when I was in grammar school in Nagano Prefecture I complained about my lunch one day. Father became angry and threw the lunch box dwon from upstairs. I still remember that. He never laid hands on us.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: There were 8 of us counting the ones already deceased. As the pastor had very little income we did not have enough nourishment, so the children died one after another of tuberculosis. First my older sister died of T.B. when she was 15 years old. Then my younger sistar died just before she graduated from high school. My younger brother who went to a school in Chicago after almost graduating from college in Japan also died of T.B. My youngest brother,also, died of T.B. In those days the pastor was so poor that we didn't have enough money to buy rice for the next day. It is not like pastors now who have good income. My younger brother who retired in Tokyo recently about 40 years of service, and I are the only ones alive.

T: I am surprised your mother who was brought up in rich family could stand the life of poverty.

I: She came from a rich family. As I told you before, my father wanted to become a physician, but his father could not afford to sent him to school. My grandfather was a son of a rich man and served as a mayor, but he lost his fortune in land or something so he could not send my father to school. My father was working as a newspaperman when he was led to Christianity by Dr. Mc Donald and became a pastor. My mother worked hard as a pastor's wife.

Q: Did you ever hear your mother complain?

A: No, she never complained. She must had some worries, but she never complained. I am very grateful to her for that.

Q: What do you remember about your mother?

A: She was a quiet woman, and did whatever my father told her to do. She was a typical Japanese wife. She was sorry she could not help us with the school work as she did not have much education. She had only 8th grade education, so when we asked something difficult she could not help us. Then she used to say she wished she had more education. She was a typical wife and worked hard for her husband and children. I am still grateful to her.

Q: She was a gentle mother, wasn't she?

A: Yes, she was a gentle mother, and did not scold us much. When I left for America she cried. I was married 3 years after I came to America. One year I went back to Japan with 2 oldest children, and stayed in Chiba with my mother for a month. She took good care of her grandchildren then. When we said good-bye before we came home she looked very sad. I cannot forget the sad expression on her face. That was the last time I saw her. She died not too long after that.

Q: How many years did you go to grade school?

A: In those days grade school was 4 years and junior high school was 4 years. After 4 years of grammar school I attended the Toyo Eiwa Girls' High School in Azabu, Tokyo. I was there for 4 years when my father was assigned to a church in Yamanashi Prefecture, so I attended a high school there and graduated from it. After that I wondered whether I should become a kindergarten teacher or attend a seminary and become a missionary. After I prayed I decided to become a missionary and attended a Bible school in Yokohama and graduated from it.

After I graduated from the Bible School I received my first appointment to a church in Nagoya and stayed there for a year. Then I received an appointment to a church in Toyohashi, and worked there as a church worker for 5 years. After that I was assigned to Mita Methodist Church in Tokyo. About 2 years after I started working there, a church in Los Angeles wanted me to come and work there as they were having much trouble with picture brides. Another worker named Ms. Hiraoka and I went to Los Angeles together and worked there for 1½ year, but as they did not need two women workers I went to San Francisco and worked at the present Pine Methodist Church for 2 years. In the meantime Imai and I were married in 1923.

Q: What kind of case do you remember when you were taking care of the picture brides in Los Angeles?

A: I forgot the names but young brides could not get along with old husbands, and were beaten and cried. It was very tragic. I went to their homes and helped them. The minister went between them and granted them divorce if they wanted. I worked with the minister.

Q: Did some brides remarry?

A: Some of them lived alone, and others married men who lived in America. In the meantime picture brides were prohibited by law, so those people stopped coming to America.

Q: When did you come to Los Angels?

A: In 1920.

Q: What else do you remember about the picture brides?

A: As you know, no new picture brides came after 1920. A year and a half later I went to San Francisco and worked at the present Pine Methodist Church. In those days there were many picture brides there. I lived in the Women's Home which was run by the Missionary Society. Many children whose parents were divorced, and picture brides lived there, so I became friends with them. I did not live in Los Angeles long, so I did not take care of them as much as I did in San Francisco. There were many unfortunate people in San Francisco.

Q: What other case were there?

A: The biggest problem was the difference in ages. As husbands were old they did not get along with young wives. As the brides came here just by looking at photographs, they did not know what kind of men their husbands were. Men who worked as domestic workers or gardeners had their photographs taken in front of nice homes where they worked and sent them to the brides, so the brides came here thinking that their husbands were well-to-do living in big houses. That was the reason why they did not get along well. Some wives ran away not only in San Francisco, but one woman came to the Women's Home from Napa. I had a scarely experience when her husband came after her to the Home.

Q: What did you do when the husband came after the wife?

A: It was too complicated so the pastor called the lawyer. At one time a policeman came. I think someone informed the police that a bad husband was coming after his wife, so ~~wanted~~ asked the police to protect her. I had many such scarely experiences.

Q: Did the police protect the wife?

A: I think the head of the Home informed the police that a man was coming after his wife, and asked the police to protect her. The man was arrested. I don't know what happened after that. I think the man came to beat her up. In the meantime the picture brides stopped coming, so there was no more such work. As I told you before, there were many children of divorced parents in the home, but as they got older and got married they left the home.

Q: Did most picture brides hold out?

A: Yes, they did. They put up with their husbands. In the meantime children were born and things got better. There were many such cases. There was big difference in ages between the husbands and wives. Men around 50 years old married women around 25 years old. There were brides younger than 20. It is hardly possible that they get along well. Some women were married to men as old as their grandfathers. In those days men did not have much education, but most women were well-educated, so they did not get along well. I took care of many such brides.

Q: How did you get to meet Mr. Imai?

A: He came to the church in San Francisco once in a while, and we came to know each other there. Mr. Endo, a member of Pine Methodist Church was Imai's friend, and he introduced me to him. I was planning on returning to Japan in 3 years so I did not have any intention of getting married.

Q: Was it a love marriage?

A: I would not have married him if I didn't like him. We were married in 1923, the year of the great earthquake in Tokyo.

Q: What was the difference of age between you and Mr. Imai?

A: Imai was born in 1885 and I was born in 1891, so he was about $5\frac{1}{2}$ years older.

Q: Did Rev. Imai minister in Walnut Grove?

A: He went there in 1915, and married me 7 years later.

Q: What kind of a place was Walnut Grove in those days?

A: It was a dirty Chinese gambling town. Imai wanted to abolish gambling, so he brought the Salvation Army band and marched for anti-gambling. In Stockton a man was killed by gamblers. Imai took Sunday school children with him, and with a big banner which read, "Anti-Gambling" marched through the Chinatown and Japantown singing hymns and other songs. He was nearly killed a couple of times but he was not injured much. He worked hard to abolish gamling. It is a quiet town now, but it was like that in those days.

Q: Did you go there 7 years after he went there?

A: He worked there for 15 years. I was there for only 7 years, so I went there 8 years after he got there.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was before you came here?

A: I did not hear anything bad, so I thought it was a beautiful place with clean society and high standard of living. I came here to help someone. When I came to Los Angeles I stayed at Children's Home where unfortunate children were living. As there were about 3 white people taking care of them I did not work there, but I made friends with them and ate with them. I worked mostly at the church.

In the meantime I gradually found out how the Japanese society was. What I felt most keenly was that there was hardly any educated Japanese Isseis.

Q: What else do you remember about Walnut Grove?

A: Many things happened while I lived there for 7 years.

Q: What kind of things happened?

A: There were not many members at first, so Imai had to preach to about 3 members. Later, the number of members gradually increased. The happiest thing that happened there was that Dr. Akamatsu who is ill in New York now became an evangelist from our church. How he became an evangelist was like this. One night we gave him a farewell party before he left for a college in the East. That night, Mr. Nagawa, a father of a Sunday school pupil came to the party drunk. When Saburo Akamatsu gave a testimony saying that he decided to go to a college in the East and become an evangelist, I think Mr. Nagara understood it and was moved by it. In front of many people he said in tears, "I am very sorry I gave all of you and my wife much trouble by drinking. When I heard Saburo say that he decided to become an evangelist I was very sorry for what I have done." He was drunk but he repented in front of all the people, and encouraged Saburo to do his best. Saburo was encouraged all the more and became an evangelist. That was the happiest thing that happened while we were there.

There were also some husbands and wives who quarrelled and came to the manse all the time. We were like social workers. I liked that kind of work. As you have heard, Imai did not go to a seminary, so he did not have deep knowledge of the Bible, nor deliver fine sermons. Instead, he helped unfortunate people. He was like a social worker.

Q: Did husbands and wives come to the manse when they quarrelled?

A: Wives usually came crying when they were beaten up by husbands. When we asked why, we found out that there was big difference in ages or education. After the children are born they control themselves and do not quarrell as much. Some husbands and wives were divorced. My husband used to make peace between two sides. He was good at that. In 1930 he was appointed to come to Dinuba.

Q: Were there many gambling houses in Walnut Grove?

A: There are still some in China Town, but they are not as rough as they used to be.

Q: When many Isseis were there .....

A: They used to go there all the time. That is why they lost all the money they earned. That was one of the reason for quarrells between husbands and wives. When the men lost all the money they earned, and the wives complained about it, they started quarrelling. Then their children came crying, and it was miserable. No more Japanese come from Japan now, and only the Niseis and Sanseis are there. Walnut Grove was a special place in America. Nowadays it is not allowed by the law, but in those days there was a segregated school.

The Blacks attended the white school while Chinese and Japanese attended the Oriental School. Children who went to the Oriental School was not good at English. The government does not allow segregated schools, so now they all go to a beautiful grade school.

Children who attended the Oriental School could not speak English well. As we had lived in Walnut Grove for 15 years, I knew we were going to move soon. So in July I went to San Francisco and enrolled my oldest daughter in kindergarten. As she did not hear English in the Oriental School in Walnut Grove she did not understand English when whe went to school in San Francisco. When her teacher said, "Forward march!" she just stood there while other pupil all marched away. In September we moved to Dinuba, but she had a hard time in the first grade as she was not used to English.

Q: How was the prostitution in Walnut Grove?

A: I heard that there were some, but I did not see one. I heard there were some before my time, but there wasn't any when I was there. I don't know how it is now.

Q: Were most Isseis there engaged in farming?

A: That was the time before they could own land, so they were managing ranches with the white partners or in the white people's name. In 1952 they could own land.

Q: Weren't there any migrant workers in those days?

A: At harvest seasons students came from San Francisco and other places, so they had enough hands, I wonder who they used off-season. I think those Japanese farm laborers who did not heve enough money to own land worked.

Q: Were there many such Japanese?

A: No, there were not many. Most Japanese had ranches, and only few Japanese worked as farm laborers. Only single men and those who just came from Japan were working as farm laborers. At harvest seasons young students came from Sacramento and San Francisco. In the meantime the Depression came and peaches and pear business gradually became bad.

Side 2

Q: Did the Depression come when you were in Walnut Grove?

A: It was in the midst of the Depression when we were in Dinuba. We lived in poverty since we went to Dinuba. We did not have money to buy firewood to heat the building for Sunday School. The church members were so poor that they did not have money for offering. I don't know how much, but the Southern Methodist Missionary Society probably helped half of the expense and the rest of it came from the members. The members could hardly make a living much less support the church. Even for about 10¢ an hour there were no jobs. We did not have money to heat the building for Sunday School, so we burned branches of grape in the stove.

Q: Could you make a living in that condition?

A: Japanese people in Walnut Grove were very courteous, and they gave us money every time we did them a favor. When Imai interpreted for some people who could not speak English, or took some sick people to San Francisco, they gave him a lot of money in return, so my husband saved that money. When we were in need of money during the Depression we withdrew the money and used it. We had an old Ford which did not have any windows so when it rained we got wet, and it used to get flat tires. There was a meeting place in Orosa, 6 miles from Dinuba. On the way back from the meeting our children used to sleep in the car, and they would get wet when it rained. My husband bought a new Chevrolet with the money he saved, so we gradually spent all the savings and finally we did not have money to buy food for the next day.

Q: Was it during the '30s?

A: We were that poor during the Depression. Some kind members of a white church sold us goods saying, "Mr. Imai, you don't have to pay us cash now." That was a big help. When we had some income we paid them back. Sometimes we did not have money to buy food for the following day as we used up all the savings by buying a car. I remember that we paid $700 for the car. We could not visit the church members with the old car, and I felt sorry for the children. My husband went to white churches in San Francisco and Oakland and got a lot of old clothes. Then we had a rummage sale in the yard of the manse. There were many poor Mexicans

whose children went to school without shoes, so we helped them by having a rummage sale. They were glad to buy sweaters and shirts for 15¢. Imai was a good social worker, so we did that kind of work during the Depression. After that we went to camp.

Q: Did you have the rummage sale in Dinuba?

A: We had it in Dinuba in 1930 or 1931.

Q; What year did you come to Dinuba?

A: In September of 1930. Mexicans were so poor that their children went to school without breakfast. That is why Imai went to San Francisco and Oakland and got a lot of old clothes from American churches and held a rummage sale. With that money we bought all kinds of things and helped the Mexicans. In those days many Japanese came to buy old clothes, too, but they were not as poor as the Mexicans. We gave money to the Mexicans as they did not have money to buy bread. We did that kind of work.

Q: About how many members did you have in your church in Dinuba in those days?

A: When we went there the Niseis were still children, so we had only about 27 members. Among them some of them moved to Los Angeles and stopped giving offering, so only 10 to 12 people gave offering and the church was in financial difficulty. I don't remember how much income we had, but we were hard up.

Q: About how many members were there in your church in Walnut Grove?

A: There were not too many members when we went there, but about 20 people attended the evening service. I don't remember how many members we had. I think we probably had around 14 to 15 members. There was no Buddhist church yet, so people who did not belong to either religion used to come to church. Almost all the Buddhists sent their children to Sunday School. At one time we had around 150 children. In the meantime the Buddhist church was built.

Q: Was the Buddhist church built while you were there?

A: The Buddhist church is very active now. 99% of Japanese belong to the Buddhist church. Except for 3 to 4% of Sunday School children who stayed behind, they all went to the Buddhist church.

Q: Was the Buddhist church built while you were still there?

A: Yes, while we were there. They competed with us. On Sunday mornings when children were coming to our Sunday School some Buddhists used to meet the children by the bridge with candies and tricked the children to go to their church. When given candies children would go to their church, and only a few stayed behind. In the meantime the Buddhist Church became powerful and most of the children went there. After we went to Dinuba the Sunday School was pitiful. Rev. Ouchi from Dinuba went to Walnut Grove in exchange with us. He was a well-educated man, and was a good at educating children, so many children went to Sunday School for a while, but there is no Sunday School there now.

Q: Do you remember anything else about Walnut Grove?

A: After a while the Boy Scout troop was organized, and Dr. Akamatsu became a scoutmaster and worked hard. In those days Buddhist children used to belong to the troop, too. The troop bought a big bus and took the boys here and there.

Imai worked hard as a social worker. When people who do not speak English became ill he took them to San Francisco and interpreted for them. When he took me to a hospital to have a baby the nuses laughed and said, " came." That is because he took many young women to the hospital. He took care of everybody.

Q: Was the church in Dinuba small?

A: It was during the Depression when we went there, so it was in very poor condition.

Q: How many years were you in Dinuba?

A: We went there in 1930, and we went to camp in 1942. We came back to Dinuba in 1945 after staying in the camp for 3 years. Then we stayed there for 7 years till 1952.

Q: Is there any other recollection about Dinuba?

A: We did social work as it was during the Depression. There was a family where the wife died of illness leaving her husband with many children. When Imai went to that house and saw the husband mending shirts with a sewing machine, he felt sorry for them and took some vegeables to them and helped them. Till now the children bring me all kinds of things as they are grateful for my husband helping them when they were in need.

In the meantime the Niseis grew older and members increased in number. Sometimes there were 30 to 40 Niseis. In those days we could not afford to hire an English speaking preacher, so my husband had to preach both in English and in Japanese. As he was self-taught, it was hard for him to preach in English but he did. My son still says that it was hard to listen to father's broken English. Niseis were not satisfied with his poor English. In the meantime, Rev. Sakaue from Fresno Methodist Church started coming to help us part time. Also two young laymen from came and helped the Sunday School, so that was a big help. Imai worked mostly as a social worker.as people needed help rather than listen to his sermon.

Q: How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: As you know, it was Sunday. When we came home after the church we heard the news on the radio. I was very surprised and also was very sad that such thing happened. In the meantime the attitudes of Americans towards Japanese started to change. The curfew order came out right before we went to camp, and we could not go out after 8 0'clock. Our son was ready to graduate from high school, and he had a gown hanging in his room. A week before the graduation Japanese boys and girls were told that they could not attend the graduation exercise, so they had to go to the principal's office to receive the diplomas. I still cannot forget the time my son threw down his gown hanging in his room in anger. I did not see it but I heard that he put up some anti-American posters with his friends. I told him that he should not have done such a

thing, and told him to take them down. We had such a sad experience. I felt very sad thinking about Japan and about America. I wondered why they did such a thing. There must have been some other way besides attacking Pearl Harbor. Then the evacuation started.

Q: Was any Japanese attacked or beaten up?

A: No, there was no such incident. While we were in the camp some people quarrelled in the dinning room, but I never saw them fight. Extremists were sent to a special camp, so our camp was very quiet.

Q: Where did you go first?

A: I only went to one camp, which is Poston, Arizona.

Q: Did you go straight to Poston?

A: Yes, I went straight to Poston, and did not move anywhere else. I stayed there for 3 years, and ate American food.

Q: How did you evacuate?

A: By train from Visalia.

Q: How did you go to Visalia?

A: Some Americans took us there. We unloaded our luggage at Visalia station, and took a train from there to Parker.

Q: It must have been very hard for you, wasn't it?

A: I was sad because some members of American churches in Dinuba did not have good feeling towards us. But there was Rev.Clark of Methodist church who was very sympathetic towards us. He asked pastors of other churches to help us, but they were not willing to help. Only a few pastors got together and packed lunches for us to eat on the train. People of Visalia are still anti-Japanese, but in those days they hated Japanese. Someone suggested that they should pack lunch for Japanese who were evacuating, but the church members in Visalia refused to do so. In Dinuba, also, the church memebers did not have good feeling toward us, and only the members of 3 or 4 churches packed lunch for us to eat on the train. As there were many Buddhists in Visalia, Americans did not have good feeling towards Japanese. We lived in the camp for 3 years.

Q: How was the life in the camp? Was it hard?

A: We did not have any difficulties. We could listen to sermons by many different preachers, so the church life there was very good. The best thing about the camp was that women who used to work hard in the field and did not have any leisure time could rest for 3 years without cooking, so it was good for their health. However, parents of young people such as we had headaches. As young people became free, their discipline became loose. I had two daughters. Our son stayed there for a year, and then went to a college outside, but he was drafted in the Army.

It was a year before our oldest daughter was going to graduate from a high school in Dinuba when she went to camp. She attended the high school in the camp. When she graduated from the high school we did not know which college to send her to. We did not send her to a college in the East as Japanese were not welcomed. But a kind missionary ~~e~~he help her enroll in a junior college in a small town in North Carolina. After 2 years there she attended a Methodist college in North Carolina and graduated from it. She is living there now.

Those who did not have young sons and daughters had very good time in the camp, learning sewing, flower arrangement and all kinds of things without doing housework. They had a nice rest, so they were very glad. But parents of young sons and daughters had much worries as there were many temptations and many young people got in trouble. As my second daughter was still young I worried a lot. That is why my life in the camp was not a bit happy. The only thing I enjoyed was that I could worship with church members from all over.

Q: Was the life in the camp inconvenient?

A: No, as we did not have to worry about cooking. The food was good, but sometimes I wished I could cook something good. There was nothing inconvenient except that there was no private bath, and sometimes we had to go to take a lesson at night. It was hard when it was cold, but there was nothing inconvenient besides that.

Q: Were there many extremely patriotic Japanese?

A: As you know, the extremists were put in a special camp, so there was no violence, but some people quarrelled and got injured. That kind of thing happened once in a while. I think people's temper become violent after staying in such a place for 3 years. Some people quarrelled and were injured, but it was not as bad as other camps. Those who quarrelled were mostly single people. There were hospital, dentists and optometrists, so some people were very happy.

Q: Do you remember Saburo Kido was beaten up at Poston?

A: There were 3 camps in Poston, and we were in camp No. 3. Mr. Kido was in Camp No. 1. He had a terrible experience. He received a big injury.

Q: Do you know the reason why he was beten up?

A: I think he took American side. He did not say he was anti-Japanese, but it showed, so he was beaten up.

Q: Weren't the pastors kind of watched?

A: I did not hear such a thing, because the extremists were sent to a special camp, and some of them went back to Japan. All the radicals were put together in one camp.

Q: Do you have any other recollection of the camp?

A: We were worried as the young people's discipline was loose. As my daughters had temptations, the life in camp was not at all happy. As far as the food was concerned, we had enough. We were used to poverty, so we had no complaint about food. Only sometimes I wished I could cook some food, but that was out of question. On cold nights, especially when it was raining, it was hard to go to the rest room. We had to go far to wash clothes, but we could not help it.

As our second daughter had a very poor education in the camp for 3 years, it was hard for her when she came back to Dinuba and entered senior grade in the high school. When she enrolled in a junior colllege she had a difficult time. As she wanted to be a social worker, she took sociology and psychology. It would have been better if she took easier subjects. As it was so hard for her, she quit after junior college and did not go any higher, It is too bad she had to go to a school in camp. Had she stayed in Dinuba, she could have gone to an university.

Q: Did you come back to Dinuba after the war was over?

A: Yes. We came back because we heard the Emperor said on the radio that Japan had surrendered on August 15th.

Q: How did you feel then?

A: I never felt sadder. I felt sorry for the Emperor. Inside our hearts we have feeling towards America as our children are Americans, but we also felt sorry for Japan as we are Japanese.

Q: When Pearl Harbor was attacked .....

A: When we came back from the church that afternoon we heard about it on the radio. I have never been so surprised in my life when I heard about it. Through newspaper we knew the situation was getting bad, but I did not think the war would break out. Then the expression of the people in town changed completely, and I hated to go even shopping. There was curfew, and we could not go out after 8 o'clock at night. At one time when we came home a little after 8 O'clock, some F.B.I. agents were standing by our gate with grim looks on their faces, and told us to get in the house. I never felt so scared. The attitude of people changed so completely that I did not like to go shopping. Some church members attended us warmly, but I did not want to go to strange stores.

Q: Did you come straight back to Dinuba?

A: Yes, we did. Before we left for the camp, the church members had pulled all the weeds in the yards of the church and the parsonage and left them clean. When we came back the weeds were almost as tall as I. I was very sad. Some Mexicans were living in the manse and left it in a very dirty condition, but we were glad to move in.

Q: Did they vacate the manse right away?

A: It was not vacant yet, so we lived in a corner of the manse for 2 or 3 nights.

Q: Did someone ask them to live there?

A: We had asked soem members of the First Methodist Church ~~to~~ take care of the church record and other important papers. Mexicans moved in with their permission, so when we came back they told the Mexicans to move out. The members of the First Methodist Church were very kind and helpful to us.

Have you heard about Rev. Nicholson? He came to the camp and helped not just the Christians but everybody. Some people admired him, and others called him a "spy".

Q: After you came back to Dinuba .....

A: Mr. Ueno who came back earlier than us was shot at when he was sitting in the parlor. He had a narrow escape, and was just injured. The bullet made a hole in the window. In our church, _____ had a hard time. He was not shot at, but people gave him dirty looks. Gradually things got better, and now it is back to mormal. As Niseis grew older, there is more understanding between each other, and there is no more anti-Japanese feeling now.

Q: Did it take 2 to 3 years before things got back to mormal?

A: Some gas stations had signs, "No Japs allowed", and did not sell gasoline to Japanese. I think it took about 3 years before things got back to normal. At one time I had an unpleasant experience. When I went shopping in Fresno, some young boys pointed at us and said, "They are Japa!" It was not too lomg after we came back. I did not have any other bad experience.

Q: Which college did your son attend?

A: He attended a college in Kentucky for only a year before he was drafted. After he came back from the Army he attended a junior college in Reedley. Then he went to University of Pacific.

Q: How about your daughter?

A: After attending a junior college in North Carolina by the help of a missionary, my oldest daughter went to a Methodist college called High Point College in North Carolina. She took a music course and learned to play piano and pipe organ. She and a white man who came back from the service and was attending the same college became friends and were married. She has been living there since then. They have a child between them, and they both teach schools.

Q: There weren't many Japanese who married white people in those days, weren't there?

A: There were some war brides who came from Japan, but there wasn't hardly any Japanese. In the meantime more Japanese came from Japan, and the number of Japanese increased.

Q: Did you approve the marriage of your daughter to an American?

A: Imai is a gentle person, so he cried. In those days there was no intermarriages, and Japanese did not want their children to marry the white people. I was disappointed because I wanted her to marry a Japanese, but I did not cry. About 2 years later they

came with our grandchild to visit us in Dinuba. As my husband loved children, his attitude changed completely, and he welcomed our daughter and son-in-law. Since then he was not sad but very happy. I am glad the grandchild was born. They have been living in North Carolina since then. I wish they find jobs here and move to California. My daughter talks with southern accent now. They visited us two Christmas ago, but they did not visit me last Christmas as they visited their daughter who was in Scotland.

Q: Looking back at the past, when was the hardest period?

A: When I first went to Los Angeles I was lonesome, and I caught mumps. It was 1931, the first year they had the show, "The Life of Christ." I went to see it on Hollywood Blvd. The next morning I came down with mumps. I had a hard time then. I was not used to American food yet. In the women's home where I was living, the food was not good, much less taste soy sauce. I was hurting and lonesome, but the people around me were kind to me. That was my first bitter experience.

I went to Los Angeles in July, and in October of the following year I moved to San Francisco. I had an unpleasant experience there. I lived in a women's home with many unfortunate women and children. There were 2 American officers; one was the supervisor of children, and the other was the manager. They had a nice bedroom and a rest room. My room was next to their rest room. The first thing one of the ladies said to me was, "Miss Izumi, please don't use our rest room." When I asked where I should go, I was told to use the children's rest room which was very dirty. That was the most unpleasant experience I had since I came to America, and I still cannot

forget it. I do not have any other bad experience. As I told you before, I was pointed at at a store when we came back after the war, but that could not have been helped, and I was prepared for such a thing to happen. But when a missionary who was doing good work discriminated me, I had a bad impression. There was such a bad missionary.

Q: Did these missionaries understand Japanese?

A: No, they didn't. One was an old miss, and the other one was a widow. Both of them were good people.

Q: Were the children Americans?

A: There were a couple of mixed children, but most of them were children of divorced or separated Japanese parents. They lived there by cleaning and washing dishes, and they attended grammar schools. That was the only unpleasant experience I had in America. My room had a bunk bed like the children's, but the ladies had nice double beds. They cooked something special for their meals. That kind of a thing was not good for the children. I ate the same food with the children. I still feel unpleasant when I think about that. I think Christians should not discriminate. I wanted to tell the truth to the Missionary Society, but I didn't.

8 That was the only unpleasant experience. It couldn't be helped if we were called "Japs" as it was after the war.

Q: When did you have the most financial difficulties?

A: It was during the Depression. The Depression had started before we came to Dinuba in 1930. As I told you before, we received much presents while we were in Walnut Grove, so we had enough to live on. But when we came to Dinuba, people were in miserable condition, and there was not even work for 10¢ an hour. Much less the ranchers were poor themselves, so there was no income for the church. That was the hardest time.

Q: Did half of the pastor's salary come from the mission then?

A: The financial aid from the Methodist Church also stopped as their church was in financial difficulties. That is why we used up all our savings. As The Mexicans in our neighborhood had no shoes and looked very poor, we collected old clothes and sold them to the Mexicans. We did not have plenty, but God did not let us go hungry.not even for a day. We had faith in God. What would have become of our children if we worried. Imai was a gentle person so sometimes he cried. When he was angry with the children he was strict, but usually he was gentle.

Q: Was Rev. Imai a big man?

A: He was tall, around 5 feet 8 or 9. That is why our children are all tall. They don't like being tall, and say that they grew tall because I gave them too much milk.

Q: As an Issei, is there anything you want to teach Sansei?

A: Since they have pride as Japanese, I think they should learn traditional Japanese gentleness. I think they should learn good points of Japanese characters. I think Sansei are better than Nisei. Nisei have both Japanese and American characters, so they are complicated, but Sanseis are completely Americans. I think they should learn Japanese language, even short sentences so that they can communicate with Issei. Some Sansei avoid Issei as they cannot speak Japanese. Otherwise, Sansei have good American character such as being frank.